

Dear Cafritz Awards Director:

It is my pleasure to write to you to recommend enthusiastically Jane Doe for The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Awards for Distinguished DC Government Employees. In my capacity as a public manager in education and as a management consultant to executives in DC, I can say without hesitation that Jane is one of the most gifted leaders with whom I have had the pleasure of working.

Brief description of relationship with nominee

Let me start by telling you about Jane's grit and determination to serve DC's citizens. I first met Jane as a management consultant in the spring of 2007. At that time, OSSE was in the midst of a painful and dramatic transition from a city agency with a handful of education responsibilities to a fully empowered State Education Agency with more responsibility and power than in any time in its history. During the transition, the State Superintendent asked Jane to lead OSSE's performance management and organizational reform work. It is important to note that OSSE was growing at this time from an organization of 70 staff to more than 250 staff. Jane's task could be seen as impossible, or at least a huge professional risk.

Jane approached the work head on. She started by building a new management model for OSSE that helped managers see their work through the lens of the results they provided for DC citizens. Modeled after the award-winning CompStat program of the New York City Police Department, Jane created the "EdStat" process, the first accountability model of its kind at a State Education Agency in the nation. In my work with Jane in developing this program, I was constantly impressed by Jane's capacity to learn and master previously unknown content, even if it meant long hours and frustratingly slow progress. Specifically, I recall Jane working late days on end to untangle federal special education statutes while at the same time, learning to use advanced data analysis techniques on OSSE's grant application system.

Specific example of accomplishment and connection with selection criteria: implement an innovative idea and going above the call of duty

With her success overseeing EdStat, Jane was given management responsibility for the DC TAG and LEAP college grant programs, which provide millions of dollars to DC college students each year. These programs require Jane to manage directly more than 25 staff, millions of dollars in funding, and a complex work operation. Jane applied the EdStat process to her management of the grant programs by meeting weekly with her staff to review key performance measures, provide inspiration, and challenge her team to see their work through the eyes of a first time DC college freshman. "Imagine that all of these applications are students who have a shot at being the first in their family to go to college," Jane would say. "What are you going to do to fulfill this student's dreams?"

Specific example of accomplishment

Coupled with her leadership, Jane gets results. In 2007 Jane successfully reduced the backlog of scholarship applications from more than 1,500 to zero. Following this success, Jane reduced the amount of time it takes OSSE to process a grant application from more than a month to around twenty minutes. In addition to these professional talents, Jane is a funny, loving and warm person. She is the boss we all wish we had. She is tough and unafraid to tell you when you need to pull more of your weight. But, she also shows you in innumerable ways that she cares for you as a person and knows you have a gift to contribute to your work and to your team.

Data to quantify the impact or results

Nominee's attributes that set him/her apart from

Jane is a talented individual and possesses an impressive drive for excellence and accountability in her work and life. I heartily recommend her candidacy for the Cafritz Awards.

Sincerely,  
John Doe